

The Story of The Birth of Jesus

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Nihil Obstat: James T. O'Connor, S.T.D., Censor Librorum

Imprimatur: Patrick J. Sheridan, Vicar General, Archdiocese of New York

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CPSIA August 2016 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 L/P

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Printed in China ISBN 978-0-89942-960-1

www.catholicbookpublishing.com

GOD SENDS HIS MESSENGER TO MARY

GOD loves the people of Israel in a very special way. He promised that He would always be with them to deliver them from the hands of their enemies. He also promised to send them one who would rule over them in His name.

The people eagerly awaited the birth of this promised one. They called Him the Messiah, and they expected Him to be a great King and a powerful warrior. God, though, had a different plan.

His Messiah would be born as a poor and simple one—for this Messiah would conquer evil not with great armies but with the greatness of His love.

And so it was that God sent the angel Gabriel, His messenger, to a young woman named Mary. Mary was betrothed to a man named Joseph, but they had not yet begun to live together. Thus, she was still a virgin.

The angel greeted Mary saying, “Hail Mary, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” Mary was confused as to what this greeting meant, but Gabriel reassured her that she had found favor with God. He told her, “You will conceive and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.” He then told her how great that son would be.



MARY GIVES BIRTH TO JESUS

JOSEPH took Mary to that cave outside of Bethlehem. They took some clean straw and made a bed. They made themselves as comfortable as possible.

It was not their home, but the great love and goodness that Joseph and Mary had was enough for them.

Mary's time came, and she gave birth to a son whom they would name Jesus, a name which means that Yahweh saves. This fulfilled all that the angel Gabriel had told Mary.

Mary took her baby son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, a kind of blanket. She and Joseph cleaned out one of the mangers, the place where the farmers would put hay for the animals. They put fresh straw in the manger and used it as a crib for their baby.

This was not the way the people believed that the Messiah would be born. They expected their king to be born in a palace and not in a stable.

Joseph gathered the animals and brought them close around the mother and child so that they would provide some warmth during the night. It seemed as if the animals realized what was happening and were praising the Lord.

THE SHEPHERDS PRAISE THE LORD

ALL the people who heard about what had happened to the shepherds, of how the angels had appeared and announced this great news to them, were filled with wonder. Mary kept all these things in her heart. She often wondered what all this meant.

After the shepherds had seen the babe and had given their gifts to Him and His parents, they went on their way. They returned to the fields where they were tending their sheep.

All the way home they kept talking among themselves about the wonders that they had seen that night. They praised the Lord because of all that He had done and especially because He had revealed these great things to them.

